

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 6-7, 10-13, 17 and 19-22 have been amended as follows:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (original): A sputum-collecting tool comprising:

a sputum-collecting device in which a handle part is disposed on one end of a base part which has a sputum-collecting part that collects sputum attached to the other end; and

a collection sample container for accommodating this sputum-collecting device therein;

characterized in that grip faces that are positioned on both ends of said handle part in a thickness direction are formed substantially flat, and the left-right width dimension of said handle part is set greater than the left-right width dimension of said base part.

Claim 2 (original): The sputum-collected tool according to claim 1, wherein recesses or protrusions, or both, are formed in substantially the central portions of said grip faces.

Claim 3 (original): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1, comprising a stopper on the base part end portion of said handle part which prevents the fingers grasping said handle part from moving toward the base part by contacting said fingers.

Claim 4 (original): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1, wherein a fiber bundle formed by bundling a plurality of fibers for sucking up the sputum collected by said sputum-collecting part is disposed on said base part, and an intermediate portion of this fiber bundle is colored with a coloring agent that can be dispersed by the sputum.

Claim 5 (original): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1, wherein said collection sample container comprises a container main body which is equipped at one end thereof with a removal piece that forms a projection protruding to the outside, and that can be cut away to allow removal of an internal accumulated liquid, and a freely detachable closing cap for closing off an opening part formed in the other end of this container main body.

Claim 6 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1 ~~or claim 5~~, wherein a flange part for placing said collection sample container in a tightly closed state by engaging with the inner surface of said collection sample container when the insertion of said sputum-collecting device into said collection sample container is completed is disposed between the handle part and base part of said sputum-collecting device.

Claim 7 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1, ~~claim 5 or claim 6~~, wherein at least a portion of the handle part of said sputum-collecting device is covered by the container main body of said collection sample container in a state in which the insertion of said sputum-collecting device into said collection sample container is completed.

Claim 8 (original): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 5, wherein a leg part for making said collection sample container self-stand is disposed on the removal piece of said collection sample container.

Claim 9 (original): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1, wherein the handle part of said sputum-collecting device is disposed in the base part of said sputum-collecting device so that said handle part can be separated from said base part as said handle part is pulled out in order to remove said sputum-collecting device from said collection sample container in a state in which said

sputum-collecting device is inserted into and accommodated in said collection sample container.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to claim 1 ~~or claim 9~~, wherein said collection sample container comprises a bottomed-cylindrical lower part which accomodates the base part of said sputum-collecting device, and an upper part which is integrally connected with the upper end portion of this lower part, and which is constructed with a size so as to cover at least a portion of the handle part of said sputum-collecting device from the outside, and a cut part is provided which allows said lower part and upper part to be cut apart in the connecting portion of said both parts.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to ~~any of claims 1 through 10~~ claim 1, wherein said sputum-collecting part is made of polyurethane.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to ~~any of claims 1 through 10~~ claim 1, wherein said sputum-collecting part is made of cellulose acetate.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool according to ~~any of claims 1 through 12~~ claim 1, wherein the thickness of said collection sample container is set at 10 mm or less.

Claim 14 (original): A sputum-collecting tool kit comprising:

a box form casing main body accommodating a sputum-collecting tool which comprises a sputum-collecting device in which a handle part is disposed on one end of a base part which has a sputum-collecting part that collects sputum attached to the other end, and a collection sample container for accommodating this sputum-collecting device therein, and which is characterized in that grip faces that are positioned on both ends of said handle part in a thickness direction are formed substantially flat, and the left-right width dimension of said handle part is set greater than the left-

right width dimension of said base part; and

a cover body which is attached to said casing main body so that this cover body can be freely opened and closed by swinging, in order to close off the open side of said casing main body in which the sputum-collecting tool is accommodated.

Claim 15 (original): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to claim 14, wherein a holding part for holding said collection sample container in an upright attitude is disposed in said casing main body.

Claim 16 (original): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to claim 14, wherein a diagram explaining use is printed on the inside surface of said cover body, or a printed diagram explaining use is attached to the inside surface of said cover body.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to claim 14 ~~or claim 16~~, comprising an accommodating part that can accommodate a mailing envelope is disposed in said cover body.

Claim 18 (original): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to claim 14, wherein the handle part of said sputum-collecting device is disposed in the base part of said sputum-collecting device so that this handle part can be separated from said base part as said handle part is pulled out in order to remove said sputum-collecting device from collection sample container in a state in which said sputum-collecting device is inserted into and accommodated in said collection sample container.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to claim 14 ~~or claim 18~~, wherein said collection sample container comprises a bottomed-cylindrical lower part which accommodates the base part of said sputum-collecting device, and an upper part which is integrally

connected with the upper end portion of this lower part, and which is constructed with a size so as to cover at least a portion of the handle part of said sputum-collecting device from the outside, and a cut part is provided which allows said lower part and upper part to be cut apart in the connecting portion of said both parts.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to ~~any of claims 14 through 19~~ claim 14, wherein said sputum-collecting part is made of polyurethane.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to ~~any of claims 14 through 19~~ claim 14, wherein said sputum-collecting part is made of cellulose acetate.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The sputum-collecting tool kit according to ~~any of claims 14 through 21~~ claim 14, wherein the thickness of said collection sample container is set at 10 mm or less.